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Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0294

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PORG UNESCO NO IS
SUBJ: NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER QUESTIONED IN PARLIAMENT
ON UNESCO POLICY

REF: (A) OSLO 5148 (NOTAL) (B) OSLO 4857 (NOTAL)

1. IN A STATEMENT BEFORE NORWEGIAN STORTING (PARLIAMENT), FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND DECLARED THAT NORWAY WOULD OPPOSE EVERY ATTEMPT IN UNESCO OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO EXCLUDE OR DEPRIVE ISRAEL OF HER RIGHTS THROUGH POLITICAL ACTION. FRYDENLUND WAS RESPONDING TO QUESTION FROM CONSERVATIVE PARTY MEMBER, PAUL THYNESS, WHO ASKED IF GOVERNMENT WAS PLANNING TO TAKE ANY STEPS "TO REMEDY THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF THE POLITICAL ACTION WHICH HAS EXCLUDED ISRAEL FROM UNESCO."

2. FRYDENLUND, IN HIS RESPONSE, POINTED OUT THAT
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ISRAEL CONTINUED TO BE A FULL MEMBER OF UNESCO WITH THE

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RIGHT TO MAKE PROPOSALS, SPEAK AND VOTE EQUALLY WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION IN NORWAY THAT ISRAEL HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM UNESCO WAS, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, ATTRIBUTABLE TO TWO EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED DURING THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE IN PARIS LAST NOVEMBER: (1) MAJORITY OPPOSITION TO AN APPLICATION FROM ISRAEL FOR MEMBERSHIP IN UNESCO'S EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP; (2) A RESOLUTION ADOPTED REQUIRING UNESCO TO CUT OFF FUNDS FOR CULTURAL PURPOSES TO ISRAEL UNTIL ISRAEL RESPECTED UNESCO DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO HISTORIC, CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS SITES IN JERUSALEM.

3. OBSERVING THAT THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF THESE DECIEYONS FOR ISRAEL AYRE SMALL, FRYDENLUND SAID THAT THE SPONTANEOUS
AND STRONG CONDEMBATION OF THE DECISIONS
BY WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, MANY GOVERNMENTS AND A LARGE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN PERSONALITIES IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES WAS BASED ON THE VIEW THAT THESE DECISIONS WERE OF A POLITICAL NATURE AND SOUGHT TO EXCLUDE ISRAEL FROM INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. THE POLITICAL ASPECTS WERE ALSO DECISIVE FOR THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH VOTED AGAINST THE RESOLUTION TO CUT OFF FUNDS FOR ISRAEL AND WHICH SUPPORTED ISRAELI MEMBERSHIP IN EUROPEAN REGION OF UNESCO. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REAFFIRMED THE MAIN LINES OF NORWEGIAN POLICY ON THIS ISSUE -- THE RIGHT OF COUNTRIES TO SECURE BORDERS AND TO FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY EMBRACING ALL ASPECTS OF UN ACTIVITIES.

4. COMMENT: FUROR IN STORTING CAUSED BY NORWEGIAN VOTE IN FAVOR OF INVITING PLO TO ADDRESS UNGA (SEE REF B) HAS, OVER SUCCEEDING MONTHS, SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED ON CONDUCT OF NORWEGIAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY. ONE RESULT HAS BEEN TO GALVANIZE SENTIMENT IN STORTING WHERE PRO-ISRAELI FORCES STILL COMMAND MAJORITY. ANOTHER HAS BEEN MORE CAREFUL STORTING SCRUTINY OF FOREIGN MINISTRY MIDDLE EAST POLICY WHICH, IN TURN, HAS PRODUCED INCREASED MINISTRY SENSITIVITY TO THE VIEWS OF THE STORTING
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AND TO THE LIKELY DOMESTIC POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF MINISTRY DECISIONS. WE HAVE NOTICED GREATER CARE ON THE PART OF MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN BRIEFING MEMBERS OF THE STORTING FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE THAN WAS THE CASE HERETOFORE.
BYRNE

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